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ABSTRACT

Intended for use mainly by secondary school teachers of students with low reading achievement, the Reading to Learn (RTL) model provides the teacher with a way to assess, prescribe, adjust for individual differences, and develop reading skills while teaching content. An informal screening test (IST), the first step, determines which students are "independent," "instructional," and "frustrational" readers in the text used for instruction. The RTL model consists of the following components: (1) teacher objectives; (2) readiness; (3) reading guides (divided into three levels--fact, inferential, and generalization); (4) discussion; (5) follow-up; and (6) evaluation. (An example of the use of this model applied to a social studies text comprises the major portion of the paper.) (NKA)

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Reading To Learn: A Collaboration of Theorist and Practitioner

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Reading to Learn:
A Collaboration of Theorist and Practitioner

The RTL model is a modification of the directed reading activity. It includes a screening test, objectives, readiness, reading guides, discussion, follow-up activities, and an evaluation schema. The RTL provides the secondary teacher with a way to assess, prescribe, adjust for individual differences, and develop reading skills while teaching content. It is structured so that the non-expert will have some sense of security, but flexible enough to allow for teacher and student differences. It incorporates reading theory, learning theory, and a framework for accountability.

Informal Screening Test(IST)

The purpose of the IST is to determine which students are "independent", "instructional", and "frustrational" readers in the text used for instruction. This is an important deviation from the standard use of informal reading inventories (IRI). IRI's are normally used to determine at what grade level the individual students are "independent", "instructional and "frustrational" readers. However, we have found that that is not a practical approach at the secondary level.

With the information from an IRI, the teacher has about three alternatives: (1) find material written at grade level, (2) write the text down to grade level, or (3) provide content through a source other than reading. At the elementary level, where the focus is on learning to read, this approach is theoretically sound and even practical. However, at the secondary level the following criticisms are valid: (1) material is not readily available at different levels, (2) teachers do not have the expertise to write down their text, (3) it is not always possible to present the same content, conceptually, at different reading levels, (4) by using a source other than reading, the reading to learn process is ignored, and (5) minimum standards testing in reading is administered at grade level, thus, those students who receive all instruction at instructional level are doomed to failure.

The RTL was developed on the premise that there definitely is a

difference between learning to read and reading to learn, and the students who have difficulty with the former can be successful at the latter, if the teacher utilizes some strategies for facilitating comprehension. Thus, the IST is the first step. With the information from the IST the teacher can identify students' ability to learn from the text and plan accordingly.

The IST is made by selecting five passages from the required text (if more than one text is required, select some from each), of from 100 to 250 words each. Do not use an introduction or summary, and try to represent a complete thought(ie. a sub-topic). Write five questions for each passage(inference, fact, cause-effect, sequence, and vocabulary from context clues) for a total of 25 questions.

RTL

Objectives

This component requires that the teacher determine, at the beginning of the RTL lesson, what he/she plans to accomplish by the end of the lesson. In order to stay "on target", the teacher really needs to write down what he/she expects the students to be able to do when the RTLL is completed--a type of personal contract. The written objectives will also aid in developing the other components of the RTLL.

The RTLL, Reading to Learn Lesson, may be planned for two or more weeks, depending on whether it is for a chapter or entire unit. Regardless of the length of the RTLL, objectives need to be established at three cognitive levels: literal, inferential, and generalization. All three levels, however, are focused at a "C" level of competency. Adjustment for "A" and "B" will be discussed later.

Literal. The literal level objective must include all of the facts which the teacher has determined are necessary for minimum competency. However, it is not necessary to write a separate objective for each fact. The objectives may be written categorically.
For example:

(1) TLW define all relevant terms.

(2) TLW label the bones of the body on a teacher-made handout

Inferential. The inferential level objectives are written to require that the student draw conclusions or solve problems. Such tasks as comparison-contrast, cause-effect, main idea, predicting outcomes, etc. are appropriate at this level.

Generalization. This is an important level. There need only be one objective at this level, but it is essential that there be at least one. This objective requires that the student be able to do something with the information learned in the lesson or unit. The assessment of this objective would have to be a follow-up activity which required some application of what was learned to a situation or problem "outside" of the lesson.

Readiness

The readiness component is a non-traditional strategy in secondary education. It is based upon a cognitive theory of readiness(Huhn, 1980). According to this theory, readiness for new learning includes two considerations: (1) skills necessary for the task and (2) concept/experience base necessary as prerequisites for the concepts to be introduced. It is generally accepted that comprehension, in reading, is affected by "what is already known" and "purpose for reading".

Reading Guides

The reading guide component serves the reading theory function of establishing purpose for reading. All too often content area teachers assign a chapter to read with the instructions that a discussion will follow. The problem is that the students have no idea what will be discussed until they are "put on the spot" in class. How many times have we waited anxiously for the bell to ring before we were called upon-even though we had "read" the chapter. With the RTLL, the students are aware of what they are supposed to "learn".

Also, the reading guides function as the practical approach for adjusting to the reading level of the students. Given guidance relative to the knowledge and skill level of the student, that student can "read to learn". Witness the 16-year-old boy who cannot seem to read his science book or math book, but who can read an operator's manual well enough to overhaul an engine. We have found that, with the appropriate reading guide,

he can also read the science book and the math book.

The reading guides are developed on three levels. Level one is the fact level. The format is simple. Multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and true-false. It follows the order of the text and contains questions for all of the facts necessary to complete the other two levels. Level two is the inferential level. The questions also follow the order of the text but require short answer responses. And, level three is the generalization level. Only one or two questions are needed at this level. An essay-type question is appropriate.

The reading guides must be completed. It is not necessary that they be graded, but it is necessary that they be required homework. If the teacher establishes credibility by using the reading guides to begin the discussion component, students will complete them - if not, then students will recognize them as being "busy work".

Discussion

The discussion component serves two functions. First, it is imperative that the reading guides be discussed. Secondly, the teacher may use whatever strategies, techniques, aids, or materials he/she would normally use to teach the lesson. This component is ofter included in secondary classrooms, but without the preceding components.

Follow-Up

The follow-up component is another technique for adjusting to the different learning rates and levels of understanding of the individual students. Traditionally, the approach at the secondary level, is to allot a certain period of time to a given chapter or unit. At the end of that time, a test is given and students are evaluated according to how well they did on that test. In many cases, that test is the first time the students are aware of "what they are supposed to know" and teachers are aware of "what has been learned" and by whom.

With the RTLL the approach is quite different. The objectives are established at minimum competency. After the discussion component is completed, teachers are aware of who is "on task" and who is not. Therefore,

built into the model is the opportunity for those not "on task" to receive additional time and instruction and for those who are to go beyond minimums.

Follow-up activities, then, should be developed at a variety of levels and utilizing various learning styles. Some activities should be for specific groups of students; while others should be required of the entire class. Follow-up activities should be developed very carefully, since they constitute an integral part of the unit evaluation.

Evaluation

The evaluation component is a schema. It must be multifaceted. Weighted scores should be alloted for each activity the student is required to do. The schema should be constructed so that minimum competence represents a "C" grade. Thus, the lower level follow-up activities can replace poor grades on a test but the student will not receive more than a "C" grade unless he/she can demonstrate higher competency by more difficult follow-up activities.

Conclusion

The RTLL addresses both minimum standards and accountability. It has already been discussed how the RTLL is designed to meet minimum standards. As for accountability, the RTLL provides the teacher with concrete evidence of a student's performance and the instructional modifications to meet the student's needs. It can be demonstrated that, if a student does not meet minimums("C"), one of the following is the cause: (1) student was absent excessively, (2) student needs more time on task, or (3) student's problems are severe enough to necessitate a referral to special education.

RTLL for Fifth Grade Social Studies

Text: The United States and the Other Americas. MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980.

Unit: "The South Central States"

The RTLL was used to present this unit so that the energies of the teacher and of the students would not be focused on rote memorization. A real attempt was made to develop broader concepts through personal interaction, with the goal of anchoring the necessary facts by connecting them to the broader concepts.

When considering the Unit on the South Central States, emphasizing Louisiana(our home state) and using the "total" child as a point of focus, the following goals were established: (1) lessen the feeling of helplessness or "not being important", (2) combat apathy, (3) encourage self-pride and pride in others, and (4) increase knowledge of community, state and region. The specific objective for accomplishing these goals were as follows:

Objectives

Fact

1. Define selected terms
2. Recall selected facts about the history, geography, culture, economics, and government of the region.

Inference

1. Read industrial region maps, product maps, and special purpose maps
2. Read tables and graphs
3. Discuss historical change and progress
4. Discuss growth of trade and making a living
5. Discuss government structure, procedure, and systems

Readiness

Two concepts were to be introduced in "Readiness": (1) the history, culture, economics, and geography of the region, and (2) government function and purpose. For concept one the focus was on Louisiana; for concept two the focus was on Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish, and Louisiana.

Through previous experiences and interactions with the students, it had been determined that (1) they were not very familiar with their community, and (2) they had not had enough experiences to prepare them for concept two. Also, these attitudes seemed to be apparent: (1) they did not know that

they should be interested in "that kind of stuff" and (2) they felt that they were "just kids" and that there "wasn't anything that they could do about those things"

The readiness activity that addressed concept number one was a costume contest. Two weeks in advance the students were told to research some aspect of Louisiana history, culture, geography, or economics and to design a costume to represent that aspect. When the unit was to begin a contest was held, with judges and in the presence of the entire shcool assembly, where each person wore his/her costume and spoke briefly about it.

The second readiness activity dealt with concept two. Six weeks before the start of the unit during a language arts lesson on letter writing, the students were asked to write a city, parish and state official. In these letters they requested pictures and some description of the duties and responsibilities of the position. As answers were received they were assimilated in a scrap book that was ready as a reference for the start of the unit.

Both of these activities required active, creative involvement by the student. They were "ready" to learn.

Reading Guides

The following Reading Guide was developed to direct the students' learning from the textbook:

Level 1

1. In the space provided before each definition, write the number of the word that matches it.

   1) delta 2) gusher 3) mahair 4) refinery 5) reservation

   _____An area set aside by the government for the use of Indians.

   _____Land built up by mud and sand brought down by a river.

   _____A plant in which raw materials are changed into useful products.

   _____Cloth made from hair.

   _____An oil well which shoots gas and oil high in the air.

2. Complete each sentence below filling in the blanks.

   1.) The first white maen to visit the South Central States were explorers from _____.

2.) Because the Mississippi often overflows its banks, _____ _____ have been built to hold back the water.

3.) The only state in the South Central States in which rice is not grown is _____.

4.) A large cattle farm is called a _____.

5.) The largest city in Texas is _____.

3. Draw a line from each product in Column A to the group of words in Column B that describes it.

Column A	Column B
bauxite	a mineral from which gasoline is made
petroleum	a mineral which is good, clean fuel
helium	a mineral from which aluminum is made
sulphur	a very light gas which does not burn or explode
natural gas	a yellow mineral used to make many chemicals

4. Answer the following fact questions.

1) How long is the Mississippi River?

2) Where does it begin and end?

3) When did the United States purchase the Louisiana Territory?

4) When did Louisiana become a state?

5) When did Arkansas become a state?

6) When did Texas become a state?

7) When did Oklahoma become a state?

5. Matching

elect	The part, or house, of congress which has the most members
Senate	Member of the House of Representatives
Senator	Elected highest official of the State.
Governor	A body of persons responsivle for making laws
democracy	The house of congress with the fewest members
legislature	A way of life in which all persons are considered free and equal
Representative	to choose officials of the government
House of Representatives	member of the Senate

Level 2

1. On the map of the United States locate the four South Central States.
   a) What kind of climate would you expect to find?
   b) Locate the capitol of each state?
2. Study the product map on page 313.
   a) What is the most important product?
   b) What part of the area lies in the cotton belt?
   c) Identify the minerals for this area.
3. In each blank space write the name of a state studied in this unit that will match the description.
   1)_____produces more natural gas than any other state.
   2)_____grows about three-fourths the cane sugar in the U.S.
   3)_____is the chief oil producing state.
   4)_____is the chief bauxite producing state.
   5)_____has large quantities of helium.
   6)_____is the state with many French names.
   7)_____was formerly called Indian Territory.
   8)_____leads in raising cattle, sheep, goats, and mules.
   9)_____was opened for settlement in 1889.
   10)_____is the leading lumber state in the South Central area.
4. Number these events in the order in which the happened.
   _____Oklahoma was opened to settlers
   _____LaSalle explored the Missippi
   _____Texas entered the Union
   _____The United States bought Louisiana
   _____Texas became an independent republic.
5. Early settlement by European nations has left its mark on the South Central States. Check the statements below which prove this.
   ____The Alamo, a shrine of liberty, was an old Spanish mission.
   ____Louisiana was named for a French King.
   ____Oklahoma is an Indian name.
   ____El Paso and San Antonio are the names of two Texas cities.
   ____Texas produces much helium.

____Levee is a word that comes from the French language.

____There is a city named Orleans in France.

____Arkansas and Oklahoma have mountains named the Quachita Mts.

6. How are the terms "Parish" and "County" the same and different?
7. What is a "police jury" and in which of the states do you find them?
8. Why did the Texans revolt against Mexico?
9. Why did our government set up the reservations for Indians?
10. Why is New Orleans an important shipping center?

Level 3

1. What natural regions are found in the South Central States?
2. How do winds affect the climate of the South Central States?
3. What are some of the major similarities and differences of the South Central States?

Discussion

Part 1. The students were divided into groups, each group contained students who completed various levels of the guides. Each group worked together to check and complete the guides. Then, the teacher led a discussion of the text using the guides and subtitles of the chapter.

Part 2. Additional and supplemental material was provided by the teacher. A film on Louisiana resources and wildlife, three different map activities, a time line activity, and quizzes from the text were used to develop the concepts and to check for understanding.

Follow-Up

The following were used as Not-On-Task activities for those students who had not yet mastered the "C" objectives:

"A Pocketfull"

Pictures are collected of people, places and things in our region which have been covered in the lesson. They are put in the pockets of a large apron. The pockets are labeled "Who Am I?", "What Am I?", and "Where Am I?". Students draw a picture from one of the pockets and may refer to the text to identify it.

They repeat this activity until it is no longer necessary to refer to the text for the answer.

"Tune Me In"

Section a large bulletin board off into designs shaped like a television set. Display a picture of someone on each T. V. screen. Provide markers with names of the people to attached by the students. Make it self-checking by keeping a "Numbered Key" corresponding to the channel number of the T.V.

"Messages to Citizens, Companies or Organizations"

(Develop the concept that community growth comes through the efforst of the people living in the community and state.)

Students bring to class newspaper articles with a picture featuring individuals who are involved with community growth and leadership. After class discussion and group reading of the articles, short messages expressing our support, are typed and attached, along with the pictures, to construction paper. Class members sign the cards and mail them to the individuals.

"Eye Catchers"

(Establish a visible source of reference for tracking and reviewing individuals contacted by the class.)

A bulletin board is designated for this purpose. A copy of the person's picture and the article containing pertinent information are displayed. Students attach a gold star to individuals who respond to their messages.

The following activities were used for On-Task students to determine "A" and "B" grades:

Video-Taped Interviews - "A"

(Students will synthesize knowledge of the text and extra reading material with language arts skills and study skills.)

Arrangements were made for community leaders to visit our classroom. Students selected one of these people to interview. Materials were furnished to the students for research to prepare questions for the interview. An advance copy of the questions was mailed to the individual to be interviewed.

Business Card Collection - "B"

(To extend the concepts of the unit, through personal contact with people who are associated with those concepts which were covered in the unit.)

Students were asked to obtain business or calling cards from officials, business men and other citizens. A paragraph was written discussing the job or position, and significance to the community, state or region, with one being presented orally. Cards collected were put into an album for all to share.

Evaluation

Reading Guide	(Required for "C")
Costume Contest	(Required for "C")
Letters to Officials	(Required for "C")
Quizzes	(Must pass for "C" or do N.O.T.)

N.O.T.

"A Pocket Full" , "Tune Me In", "Newspaper Articles", and/or "Eye Catchers"

O.T.

Business Card and oral report - "B"

Video-Taped Interview - "A"

Reference

Huhn, R.H. "Readiness as a variable influencing comprehension in secondary content area reading: A cognitive view." Learning Disabilities Quarterly, Fall, 1980.